



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

November 19, 2004

# News Release

## **86-YEAR-OLD MAN CONVICTED IN CHILD SEX TOURISM CASE** *Orange County Man Planned Liaisons with Two Preteen Girls from the Philippines*

SANTA ANA, CA — An 86-year-old Garden Grove man was convicted today on child sex tourism charges following a three-day bench trial before U.S. District Judge Alicemarie Stotler.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested John W. Seljan in October 2003, as he prepared to board a flight at Los Angeles International Airport to engage in sex with two Philippine girls, ages 9 and 12.

Seljan was convicted on a total of six counts, including - Attempted Travel with Intent To Engage in a Sexual Act With a Juvenile (1 count); Use of an Interstate Facility to Entice a Minor to Engage in a Criminal Sexual Act (1 count); Production of Child Pornography (2 counts); and Possession of Child Pornography (2 counts).

In his luggage at the time of his arrest, ICE agents discovered pornographic materials, some of which appeared to involve children, sexual aids, and nearly 100 pounds of chocolates and candy. In addition, Seljan had in his possession several thousand dollars in U.S. and Philippine currency. A subsequent search of Seljan's Garden Grove residence turned up more child pornography.

"Some pedophiles are motivated to commit child sex crimes overseas because they believe foreign child sex laws are less strict than ours and that they won't be held accountable," said Loraine Brown, special agent-in-charge for ICE Investigations in Los Angeles. "ICE is using all of its law enforcement authorities to combat this reprehensible behavior both here and abroad."

Seljan is scheduled to be sentenced March 7, 2005. He faces a maximum sentence of 270 years in prison.

The investigation began in August of 2003 after routine inspection of outbound foreign mail by San Francisco-based officers for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) turned up incriminating correspondence and parcels Seljan was sending to the Philippines. The seized correspondence indicated Seljan planned to travel to the Philippines to engage in sexual acts with the two preteens. Agents say Seljan apparently knew the girls and their families from previous trips to the Philippines.

Seljan is one of nine persons charged nationwide for child sex tourism under the provisions of the recently passed PROTECT Act, which substantially boosted the penalties in these types of cases and modified the burden of proof requirements for federal prosecutors to bring charges. The Orange County man is the first person in the country to actually stand trial for child sex tourism.

Seljan's arrest and prosecution is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative to protect children from pornographers, child prostitution rings, Internet predators, alien smugglers, human traffickers, and other predatory criminals. Since the initiative began in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 4,400 individuals nationwide, including nearly 1,200 in California. In addition, foreign law enforcement officials acting on ICE leads have arrested more than 860 sexual predators in their respective countries.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.*